



## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **State Homeland Security Grant Program Part II**

- 1. Once I submit my signed grant agreement with the required documents, when do I receive the packet of materials to complete the required elements and submit for reimbursement?**

Materials will be in the mail to districts by January 15, 2004 for each participating building (sent to the contact person listed on the signed grant agreement). You have from January 1 – December 31, 2004 to complete all required elements for each participating school building. All final documentation **MUST** be received by the Homeland Security Section for reimbursement no later than January 15, 2005.

- 2. Can my district “partner” with a neighboring district and form a consortium for this grant opportunity?**

Yes. Multiple districts can partner or form a consortium for this grant opportunity. A letter or memorandum of understanding must be on file with the lead district bearing the signatures of all participating districts indicating involvement and directing one district to be the lead agency in the grant opportunity.

- 3. Can I perform one training exercise (tabletop or full scale) to meet the requirements of this grant opportunity?**

Yes, but the exercise **MUST** include every building identified in your “List of Participating School Buildings” and their participation must be documented on a form provided by the sub-grantor. If you have a large number of participating buildings, as in a consortium, you might want to do more than one exercise since each building must be an active participant in the process.

- 4. If I decide that my district does not want to participate at this time, can I reconsider my decision after the December 31, 2003 application deadline passes?**

No, applications received after December 31, 2003 will not be accepted. If you think there is a possibility that you might want to participate, but are not sure or cannot make the decision prior to December 31, complete the forms and submit them by the deadline date. If you decide later in the grant period that you really don't want to participate, you can contact us and let us know that you wish to withdraw your application. Additionally, if we hear nothing from you by December 31, 2003, you will waiver by default.

**5. I want to hire a consultant to perform the required grant elements for our district. Is there a list from which we can choose a consultant? Are there any special requirements for consultants?**

There is no list, nor are there any special requirements for hiring a consultant for this grant opportunity. If your school district decides to hire a consultant to perform the required grant elements, you should use your district's current hiring procedures. **PLEASE NOTE:** This is a reimbursement grant and **all** elements must be completed for **each** building before submitting for reimbursement. Federal grant requirements do now allow partial or "up-front" reimbursements.

**6. How long do I have to retain grant documents?**

All financial records, supporting documents, statistical records and all other records pertinent to this grant must be retained for a period of at least three years after the grant period (April 30, 2005), per the requirements under section (V)(H)(ii) of the grant agreement.

**7. What buildings within my district or within the consortium may be included in this reimbursement formula?**

The grant is designed to give those public school administrators who have authority and responsibility for children in a building an opportunity for monetary assistance in planning and exercising for a CBRNE (chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, explosive) event. This grant is meant to protect children, not individual programs. The following building types are eligible for reimbursement under this grant:

- Main school buildings housing:
  - K-12
  - 0-26 special education/needs
- ISD buildings – if the building houses an educational program for:
  - K-12
  - 0-26 special education/needs
- Rental buildings – if operated, maintained and staffed by the district and occupied by:
  - K-12
  - 0-26 special education/needs
- Alternative education for students under 19 years of age

The following building types are not eligible for grant participation.

- Portable classrooms
- Transportation buildings
- Athletic fields and associated buildings
- Store-front rental properties (classroom is part of an existing building)
- Early head start programs (3, 4 and 5 year old)
- Community education
- Alternative education for students over 19 years of age

If a student travels to another district or college campus for educational classes, he or she falls under the authority of the host superintendent's building for purposes of this grant. Buildings can only be counted once within this grant.

**8. How often can I submit expenses and be reimbursed during the grant cycle?**

The sub-grantee (school district) can submit expenses any time during the grant cycle (Jan 1- Dec 31, 2004), however, reimbursements will only be approved once it is verified that all required elements (risk assessment, hazardous response plan update, exercise, and evaluation/assessment reports) have been completed for each participating building. Request for reimbursement can be submitted as each participating building is completed. You do not have to wait until all of your buildings are completed.

Payments will be processed only at the end of each quarter as listed on the grant agreement.

**9. Please clarify the issue of regular / overtime expenses for work performed by those individuals currently on the district payroll.**

**Grant funds must supplement, not supplant wages**, so payment for overtime expenses associated with administrative, clerical and support activities must be for work performed by sub-grantee employees outside of the employees established workweek.

Expenses for work performed by **hourly** employees must be clearly documented (copies of timekeeping records) and indicate a distinction between normal duties within their established workweek, and work completed outside of their established workweek in support of this grant.

Expenses for **salaried** employees must be for grant work conducted in excess of normal established work hours for that employee. Documentation showing hours worked on the grant and the normal established work hours for that employee (copy of contract or school policy) must be submitted with the request for reimbursement.

- 10. If someone is being paid overtime for grant participation, are costs for retirement and fringe benefits reimbursable?**

Yes, those are eligible expenses. That cost would be covered under number three on the Authorized Exercise Cost List.

- 11. Must every student be eligible for federal grant money (equitable participation) in order for the district to participate in this grant opportunity?**

No, this grant targets eligible school buildings and is not dependent on individual student eligibility.

- 12. Can staff/personnel be paid stipends to encourage their participation in any exercise and/or table top discussion?**

No, staff/personnel cannot be paid stipends under the grant agreement. However, you may enter into a contract with any staff/personnel for grant participation if that is allowable under union guidelines. You should check with your union representative.

- 13. Is reimbursement available for staff to attend training for classes (i.e., public information officer, hazardous materials response, incident command, etc) under this grant?**

No, this is a planning and exercise grant - there is no reimbursement available for individual training.

- 14. Our district is completing construction on a new school building to be occupied in 2004. Can that building be included in this grant opportunity?**

The building must be occupied by the grant submittal deadline date of December 31, 2003 to be eligible.

- 15. Can the grant pay for substitute teachers to free up regular teaching staff to complete the required elements under this grant?**

No. Since the substitute teachers would not be doing the work outlined in the grant agreement, it is not an allowable reimbursement under the grant.

**REMINDER:** Deadline date for participation in this grant is December 31, 2003. Information packets for completing all required grant elements will be mailed out no later than January 15, 2004. All grant elements must be completed by December 31, 2004 for reimbursement.

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